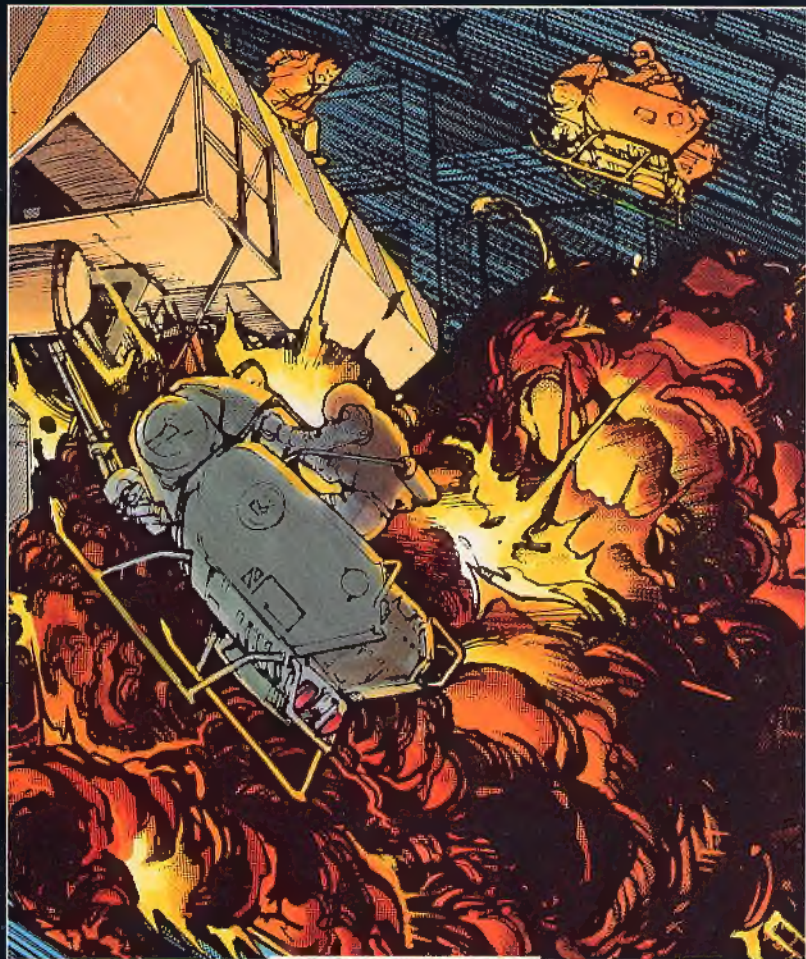


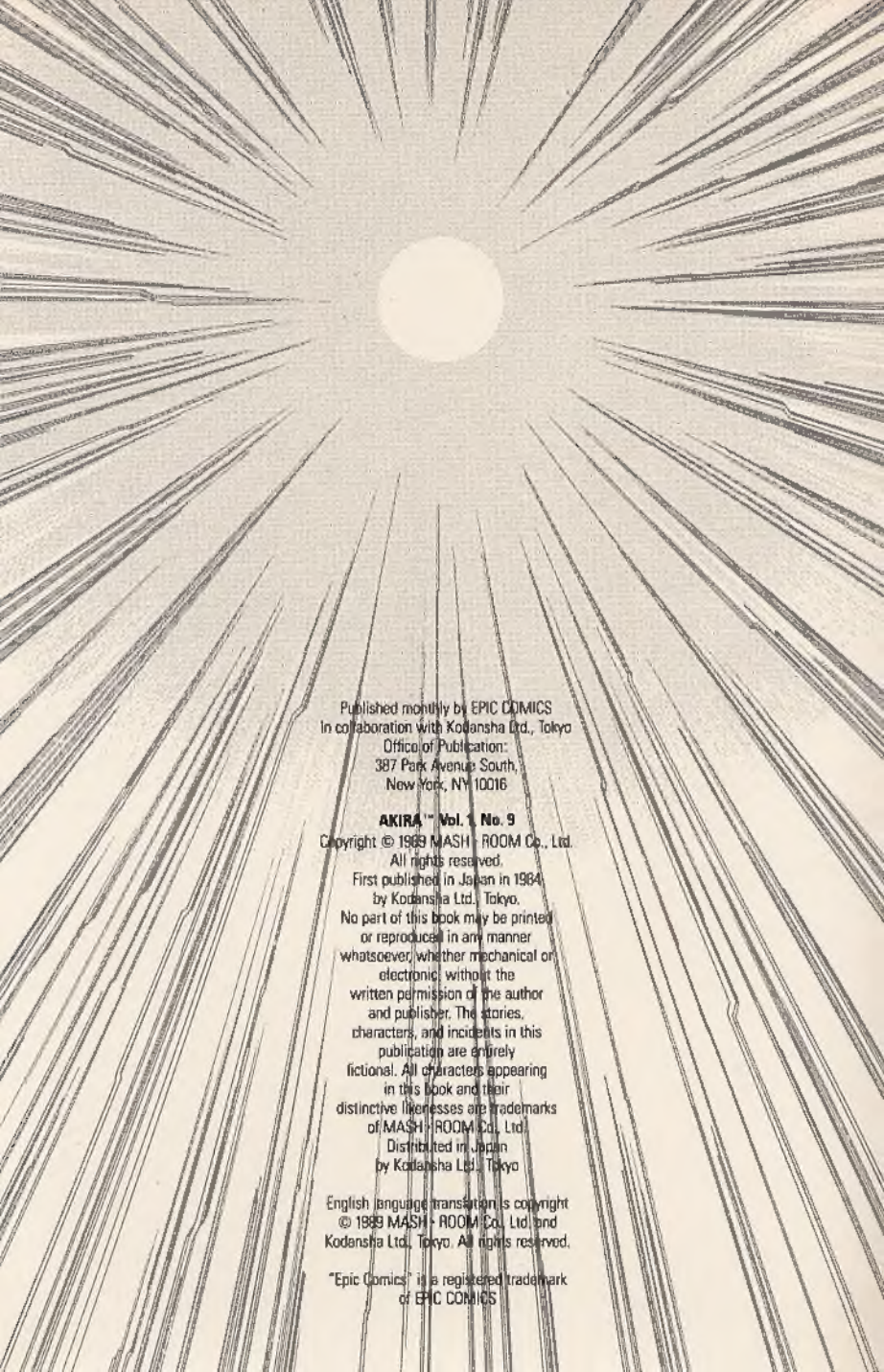
AKIRA 9



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KATSUHIRO OTOMO



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AKIRA

BY KATSUHIRO OTOMO

CHAPTER 9

STALKERS

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

The year is 2030. The world is rebuilding from World War III. In **Neo-Tokyo**, plans are being made to hold the next Olympics in the "old city"—where, thirty-eight years before, the first of the bombs fell.

Kaneda and his friends, teenage delinquents, make an unauthorized motorcycle run into the old city to check out the old site. They encounter a terrified child, known only as **Number 26**, possessing extraordinary telekinetic abilities. During the encounter, the paranormal boy gravely injures **Tetsuo**, one of Kaneda's close friends. Then, he vanishes.

The next night, at **Harukiya**, a tough local dive, **Kaneda** attempts, unsuccessfully, to pick up a newcomer, **Kay**. In fact, she and her companion, **Ryu**, are part of an underground resistance group dedicated to learning what is happening in the old city and putting a stop to it.

Trouble ensues, and both delinquents and resistance fighters again encounter

Number 26. Then the ominous **Colonel** in charge of the covert operation appears with a secret weapon—**Number 27**, a crippled paranormal child named **Masaru**. **Masaru** astonishes the resistance fighters by addressing **Number 26** as **Takashi**. **Kay** and **Ryu** had previously assumed that **Number 26** was the Colonel's ultimate weapon—the as-yet unseen paranormal giant code-named **Akira**. **Kaneda** is separated from the resistance fighters, but he manages to intercept and hide a pill meant for **Takashi**, who is recaptured by the Colonel's men.

Tetsuo—who following his accident was taken to a hospital by soldiers serving the **Colonel**—is taken from school by the **Colonel** after his recovery. Under the treatments of the Colonel's chief medical officer, **Tetsuo** exhibits powerful telekinetic abilities...and undergoes great pain. Finally, **Tetsuo** breaks out of the Colonel's installation, using his burgeoning powers to slaughter all who oppose him.

Meanwhile, **Kaneda**, trying to learn what is happening to **Tetsuo**, re-encounters the members of the resistance, and is brought back to their



Kaneda



Tetsuo



Kay



Ryu

headquarters. Questioned by **Ryu**, he denies all knowledge of the stolen drug. When soldiers enter the resistance hideout in force, **Kaneda** and **Kay** manage together to escape to **Harukiya**, where the bartender agrees to shelter them. A spy from the Colonel's organization learns of their hideout, but he is caught and left for dead by a resistance fighter.

Kiyoko, another of the psychic children under the Colonel's control, announces that **Akira**—who is asleep, and expected to remain so for some time—is going to awaken in the near future.

At **Harukiya**, **Yamagata** and **Kaneda**'s other friends tell of **Tetsuo**'s new powers and of his bloodthirstiness. **Kaneda** and **Yamagata** lead the local street gangs on an all-out attack to stop **Tetsuo**. Then the **Colonel**, alerted by his informant, arrives at **Harukiya**, and forces the bartender to tell him where the fugitives have gone.

Yamagata and his team corner **Tetsuo** in a warehouse. Most of the gang dies, and **Kaneda** reaches the scene in time to see **Tetsuo** brutally kill **Yamagata**. Enraged, **Kaneda** shoots **Tetsuo**...who survives.

As the **Colonel** arrives,

Tetsuo grabs and swallows the drug **Kaneda** had hidden, apparently dying of an overdose. A few minutes later, the terrible delinquent recovers, more powerful than ever, and the elated **Colonel** rechristens him **Number 41**.

Back at the Colonel's installation, **Tetsuo**'s body shrugs off the effects of his wounds... and his mind continues its descent into madness and evil. Eavesdropping on the **Colonel** and his doctor, he is intrigued to learn that he is not unique, and that other paranormals possess talents he lacks.

Ryu, working undercover at a construction site next to the Colonel's base, meets with **Nezu**, who publicly leads the governmental opposition party but secretly is a resistance leader as well, and they share new evidence on the scale of the **Akira** project. **Nezu**, in turn, consults **Lady Miyako**, the head of a powerful religious cult of which **Nezu** is a leader, **Lady Miyako** who bears the **Number 19** on her hand marking her as one of the Colonel's series, and she warns of impending catastrophes which may be linked to **Akira**.

Kiyoko, **Takashi** and **Masaru** fear **Tetsuo**'s power and



Takashi



The Colonel



Masaru



Yamagata



discuss plans to hinder him. Then **Kay**—who, like **Kaneda**—has been brought to the installation under guard, escapes, displaying a variety of psychic powers, including telekinesis and teleportation. She attacks **Tetsuo**, almost killing him, and helps **Kaneda** to shake off his guards, acting like a sleepwalker the whole time. As guards close in on the escapees, **Tetsuo** quizzes the doctor about **Akira**, and learns that his chief rival is trapped in cryogenic sleep. During the course of the conversation, the doctor is stunned to learn that **Tetsuo** can now read minds.

Kay, still somnolent most of the time, takes **Kaneda** into the armory where they help themselves to the one weapon that may work against **Tetsuo**—a laser. Meanwhile, the **Colonel** had deduced the source of Kay's new powers—she is being manipulated by **Kiyoko**.

Confronting **Masaru, Takashi** and **Kiyoko**, the **Colonel** is joined by **Tetsuo**, who has learned of his "rivals" by reading the doctor's mind and come to torment them. He recognizes **Takashi** as the one who injured him out on the highway and attacks the three children, forcing them to fight for their lives.

Tetsuo demands to be told **Akira's** location, and the doctor urges the **Colonel** to reveal it, suggesting that **Tetsuo** might be just what they need—a paranormal powerful enough to control **Akira**. When the **Colonel** refuses, **Tetsuo** turns on him, knocking him out. Guided by **Kiyoko**, **Kaneda** and **Kay** reach the nursery and attack. To escape the laser, **Tetsuo** jumps out the window of the skyscraper...landing unhurt in the street below. **Kay** asks **Kiyoko** to reveal the secret of **Akira**, and **Kiyoko** does, telling her that **Akira** is **Number 28**.



Nezu



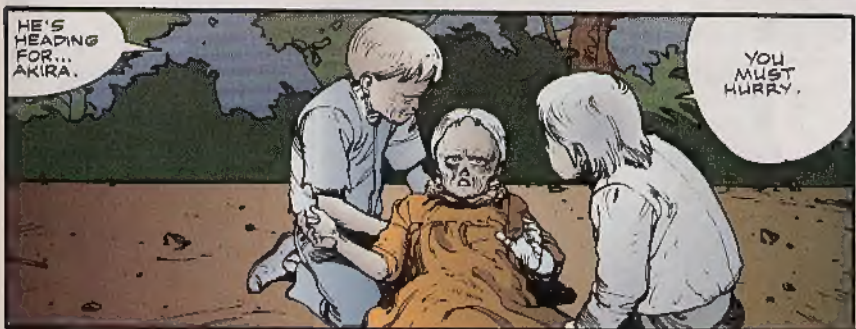
Kiyoko

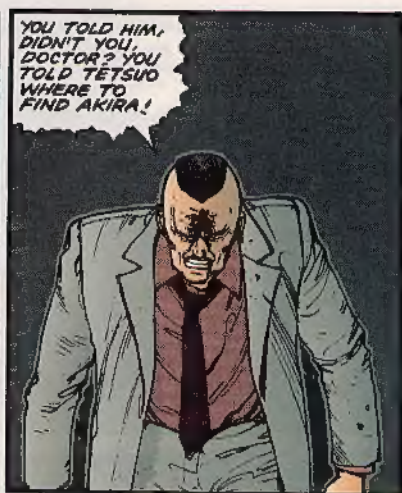


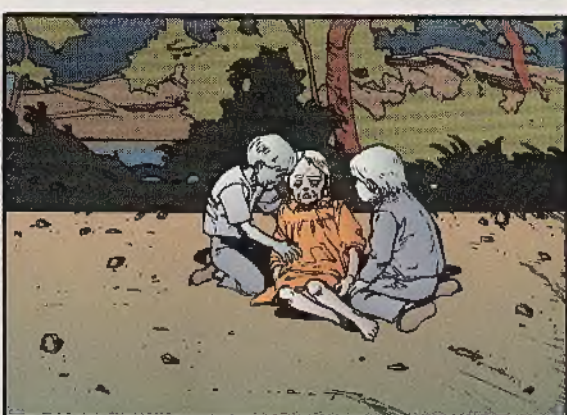
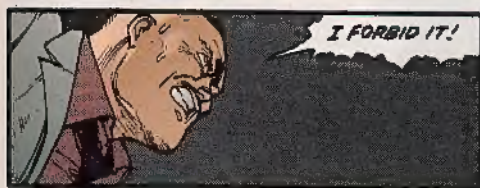
Bartender



Clown

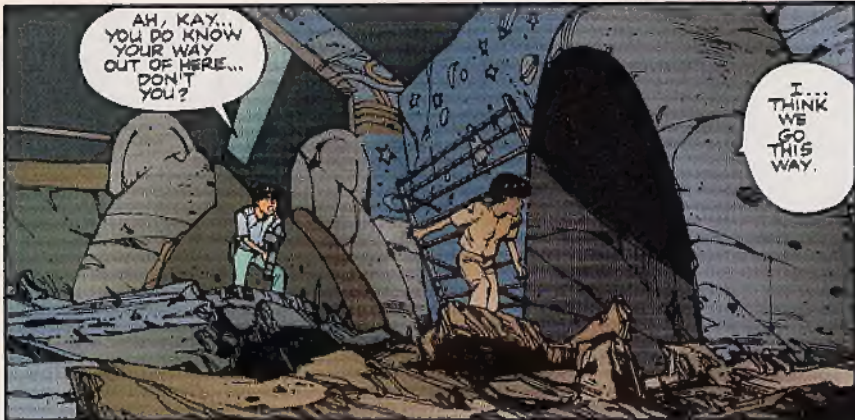




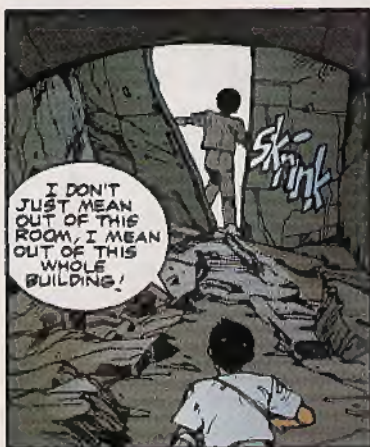


AH, KAY...
YOU DO KNOW
YOUR WAY
OUT OF HERE...
DON'T
YOU?

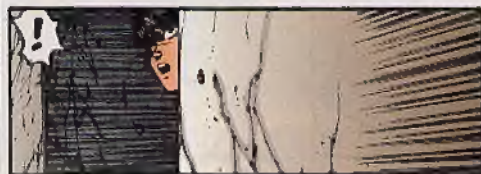
I...
THINK
WE
GO
THIS
WAY.



I DON'T
JUST MEAN
OUT OF THIS
ROOM, I MEAN
OUT OF THIS
WHOLE
BUILDING!



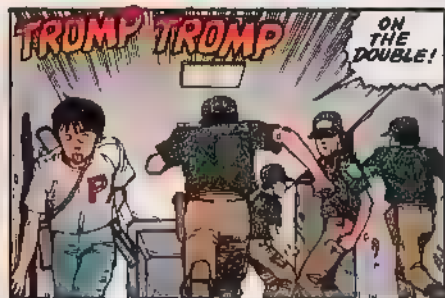
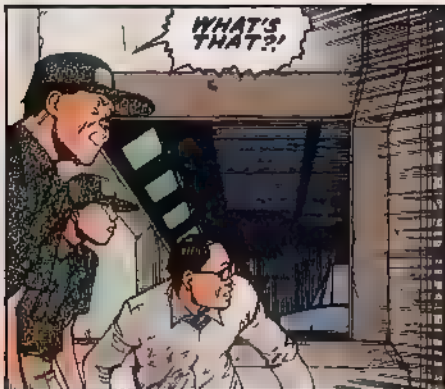
WAIT
A
SEC.

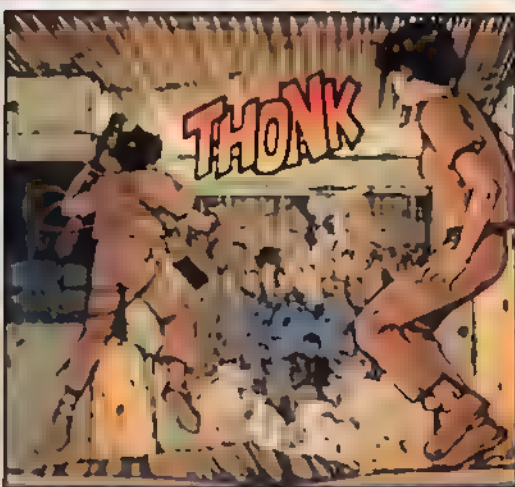
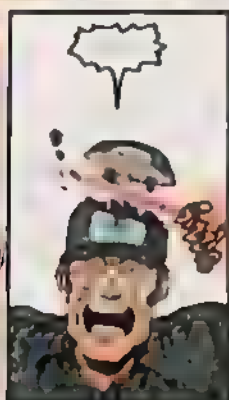
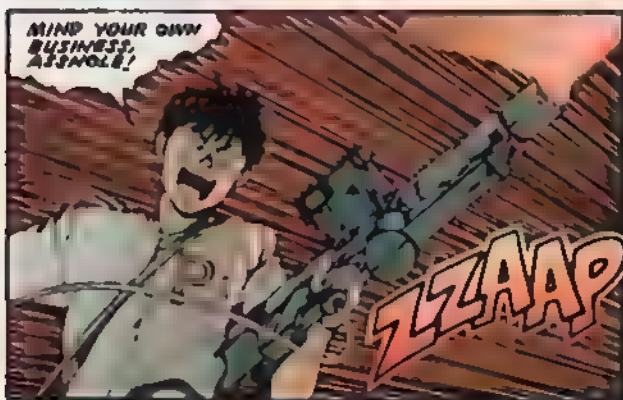
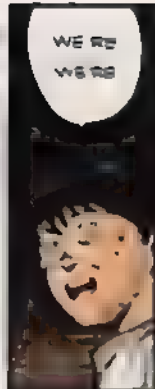


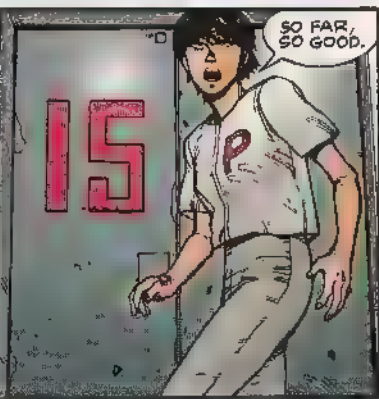
WHAT?!

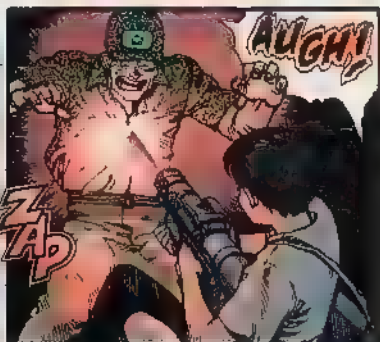
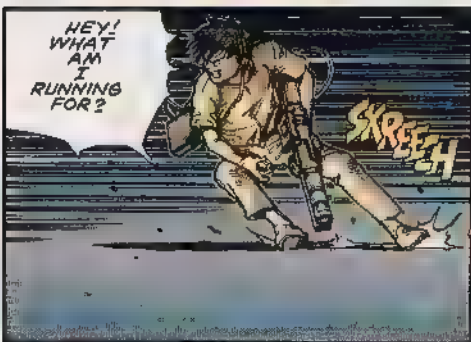
IS THE COLONEL
IN THERE?!

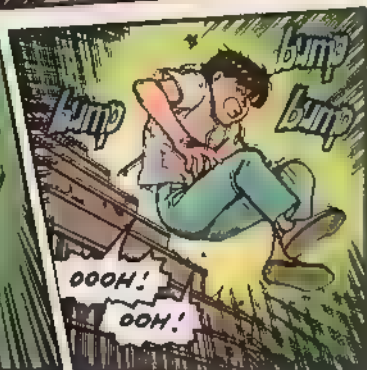
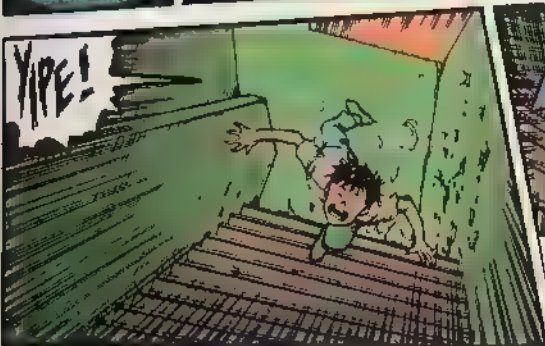
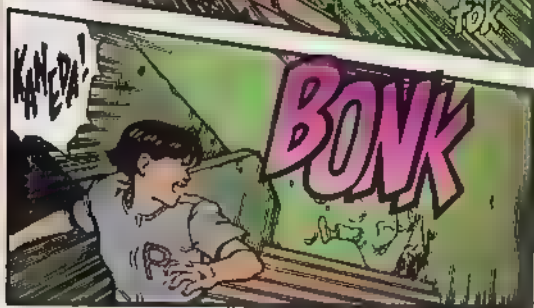
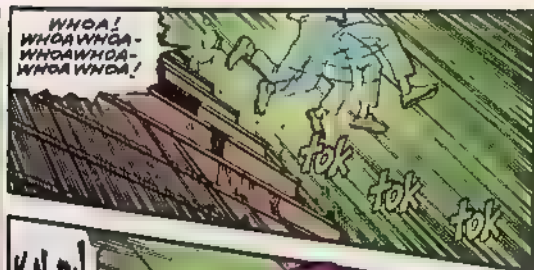
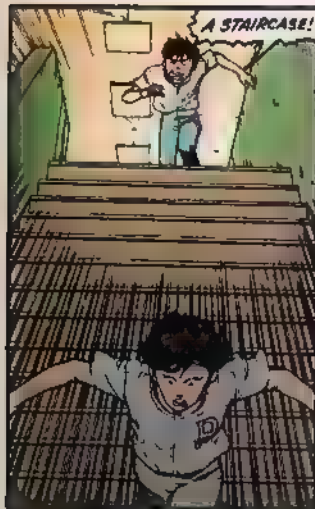


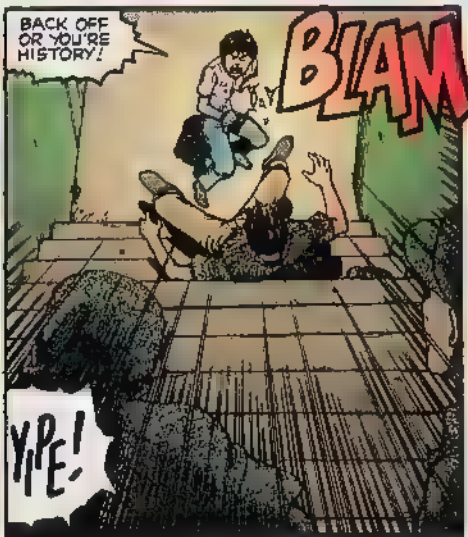


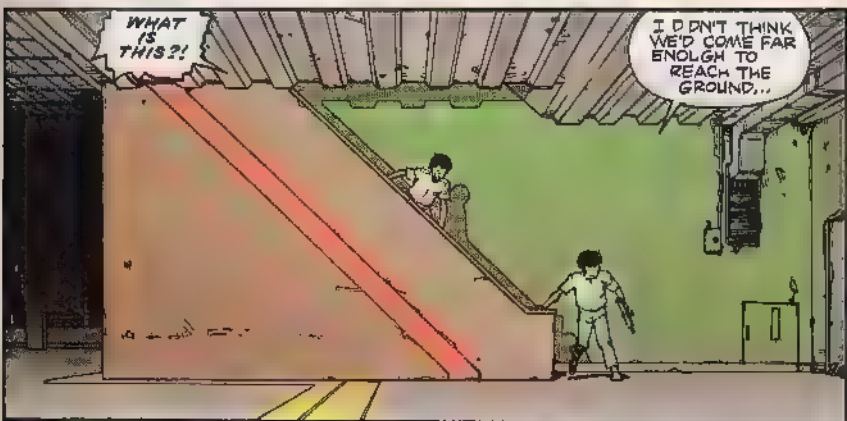
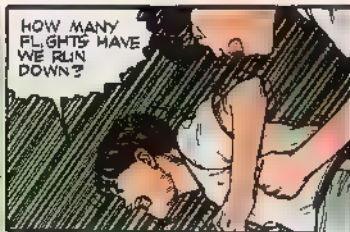






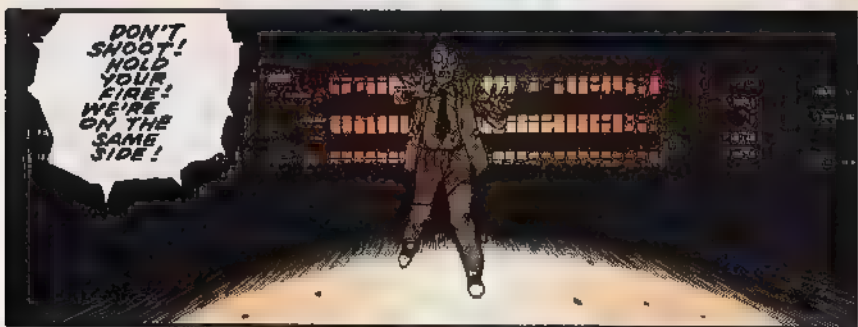


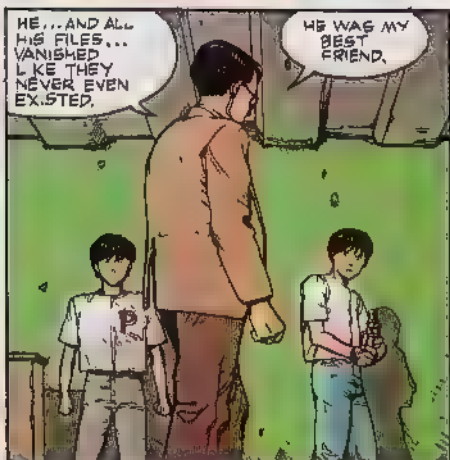
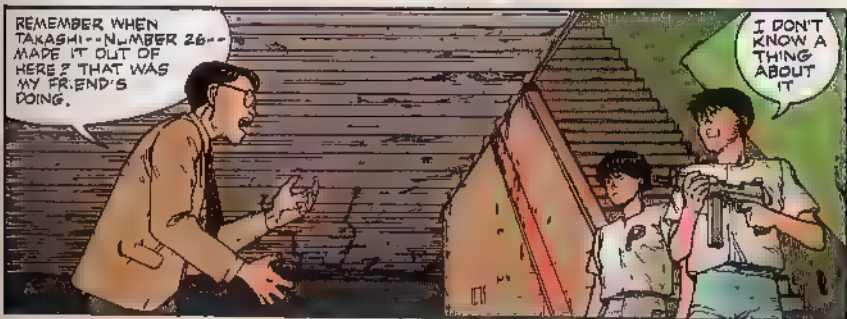
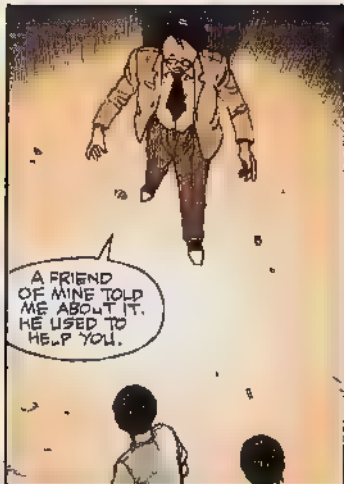


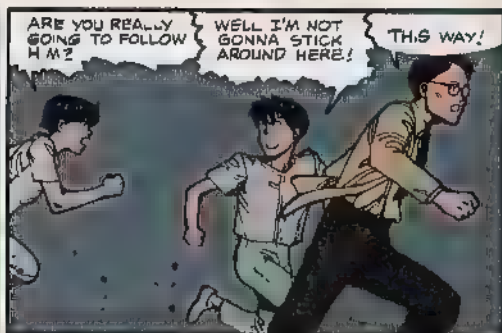
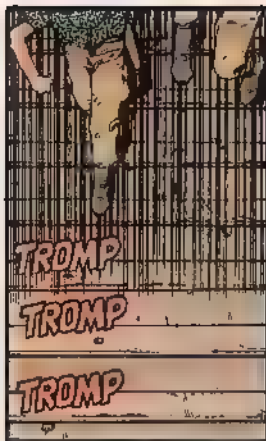


I D.D.N'T THINK WE'D COME FAR ENOUGH TO REACH THE GROUND...



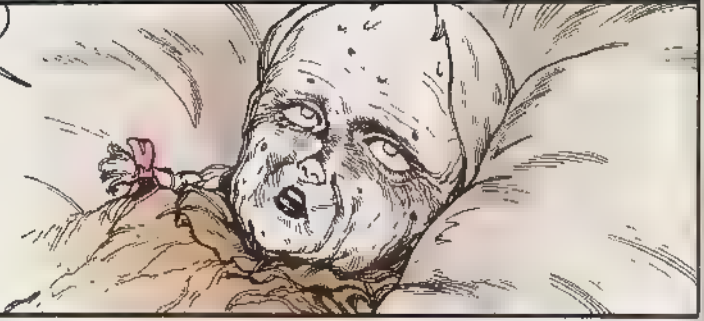






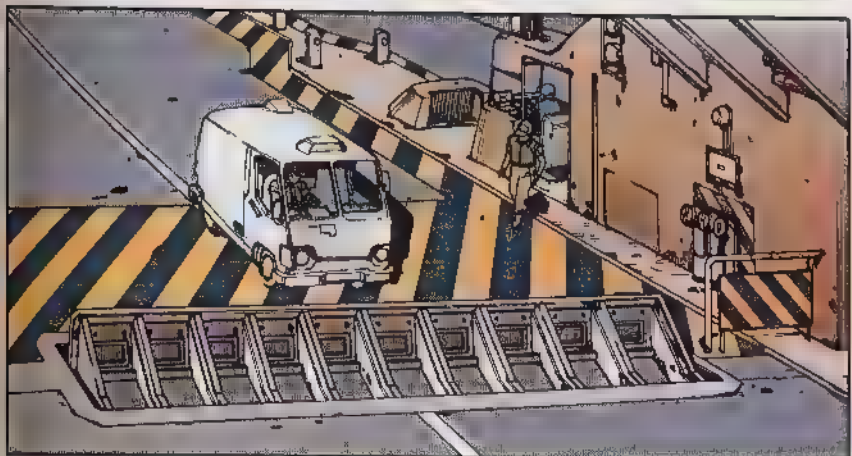
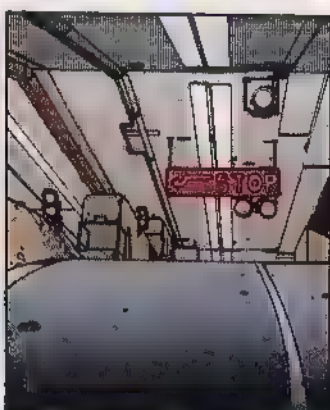
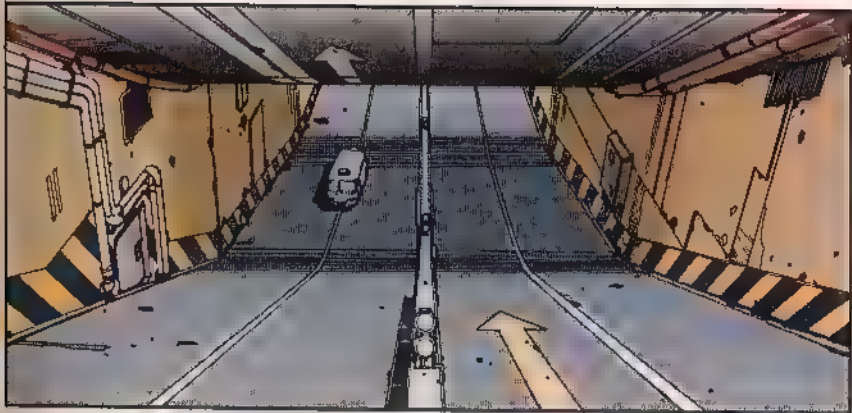


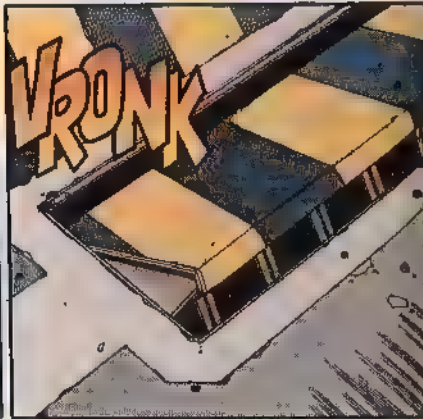
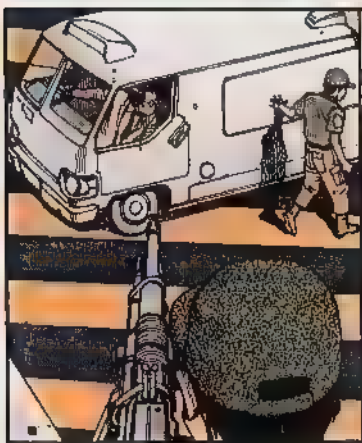
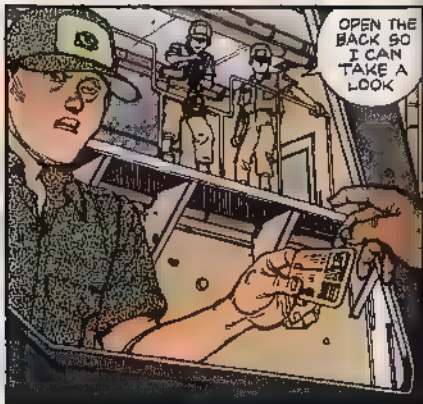
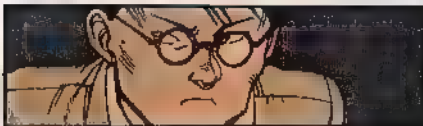
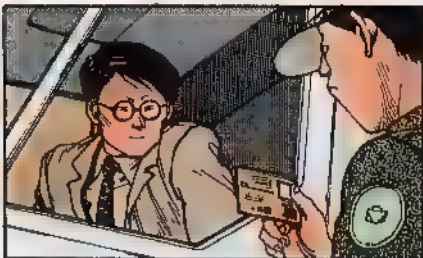
...CONTROL THE
FUTURE.



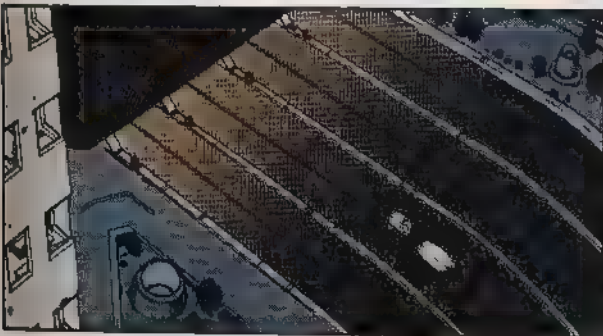
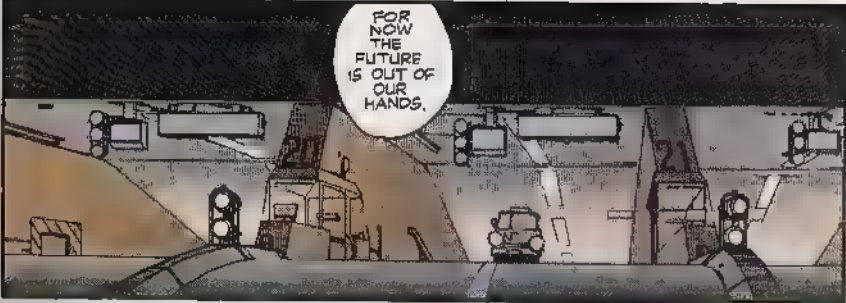
THERE
IS NOT JUST
ONE PATH!





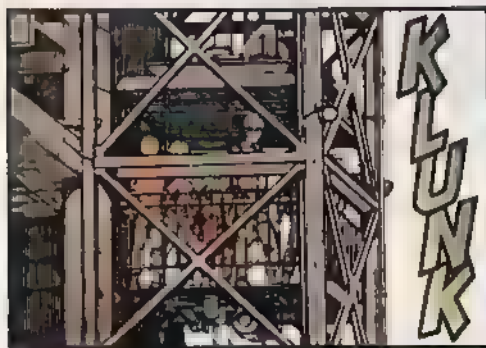


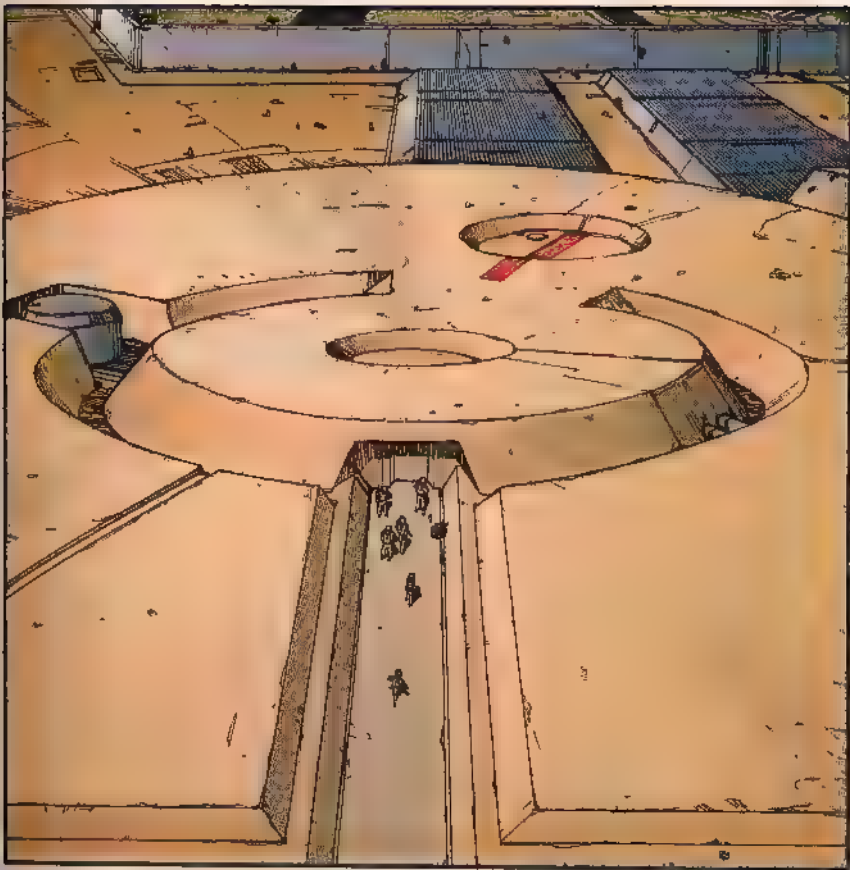
FOR
NOW
THE
FUTURE
IS OUT OF
OUR
HANDS.

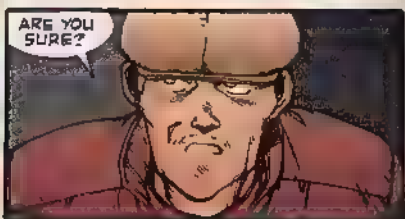
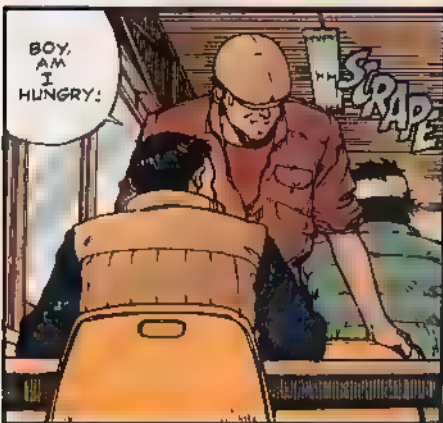
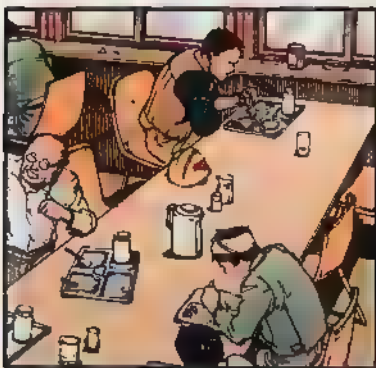


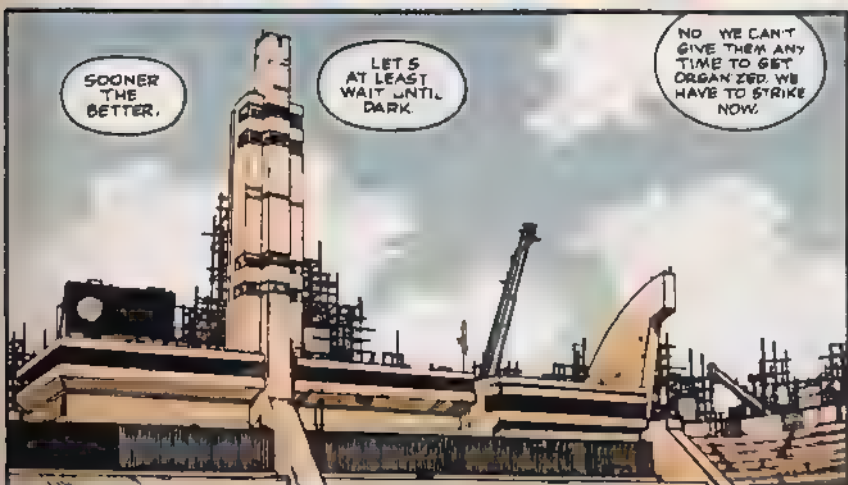
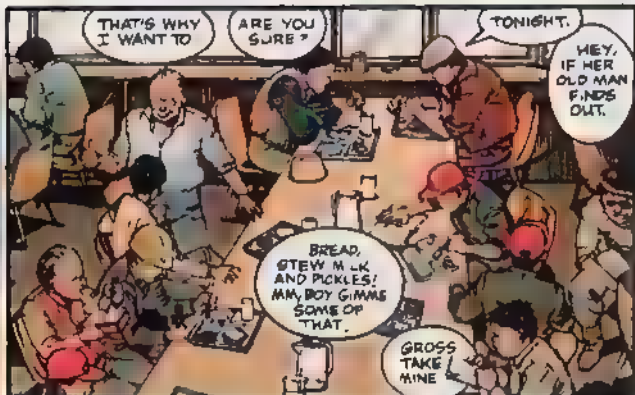
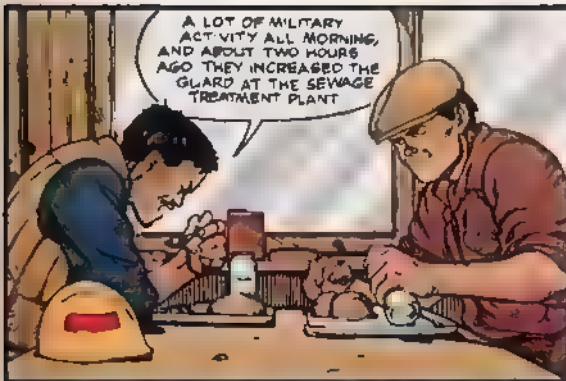
WHAT
HAPPENS
NEXT
IS
UP
TO
THE
TWO
OF
THEM.

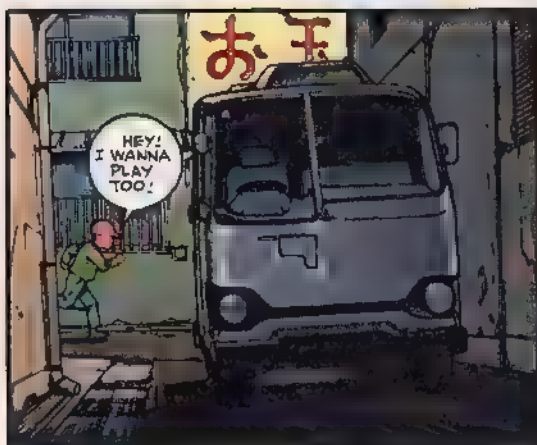
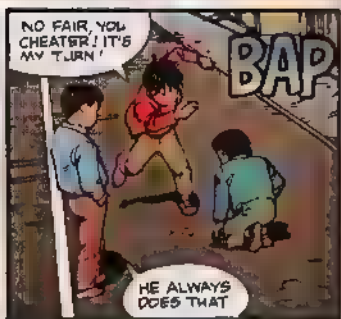
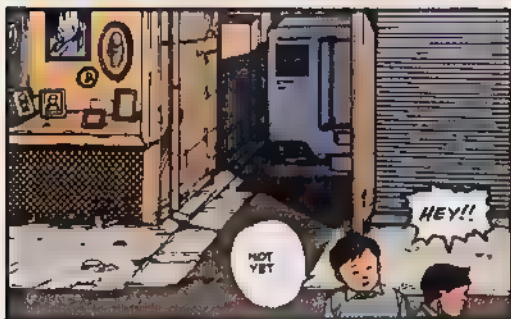


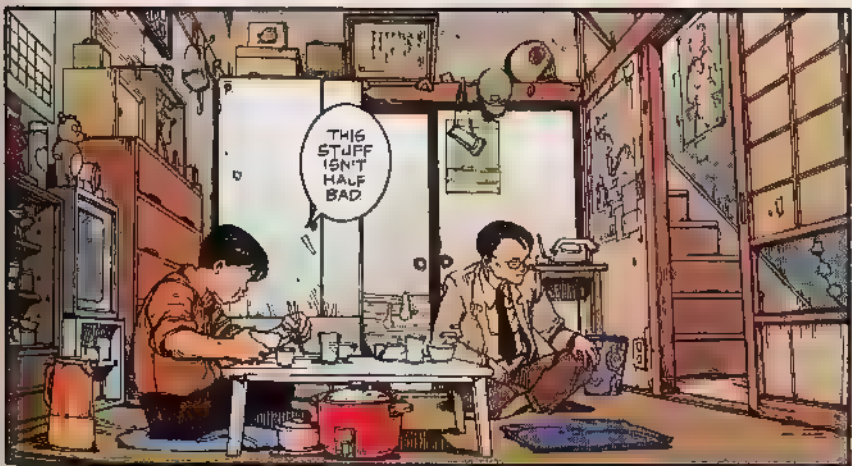
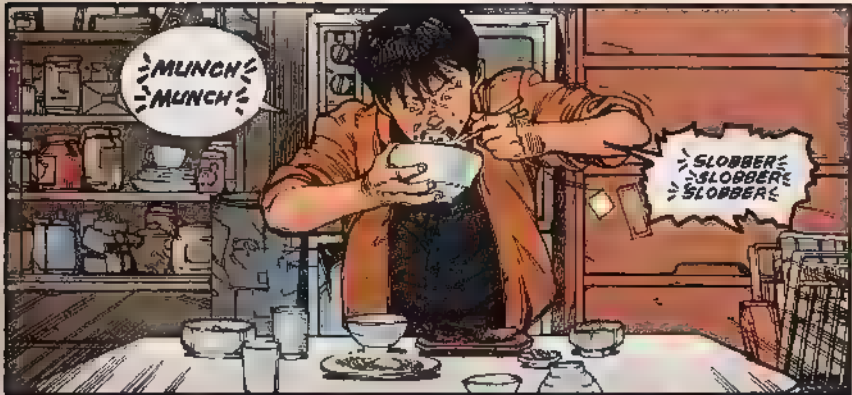


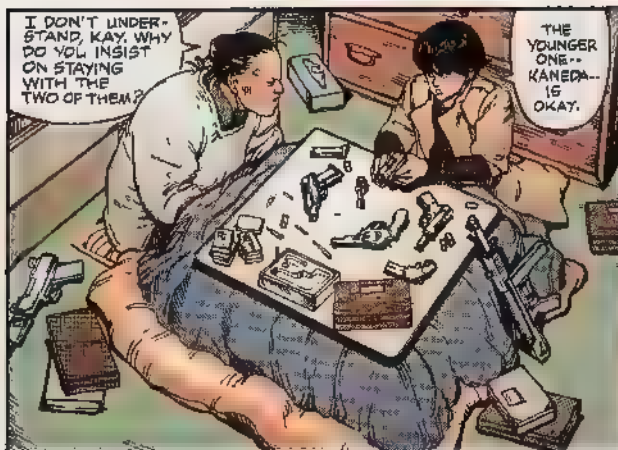








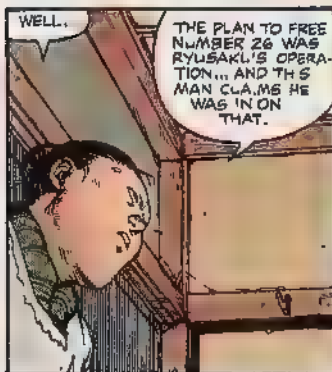




I DON'T UNDER-
STAND, KAY. WHY
DO YOL INSIST
ON STAYING
WITH THE
TWO OF THEM?

THE
YOUNGER
ONE--
KANEDA--
IS
OKAY.

AS FOR THE
GUY WITH THE
GLASSES AUNT
CHIYOKO...

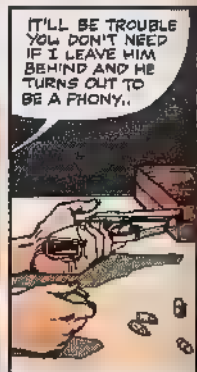


WELL,

THE PLAN TO FREE
NUMBER 26 WAS
RYUSAKI'S OPERA-
TION... AND THS
MAN CLAIMS HE
WAS IN ON
THAT.



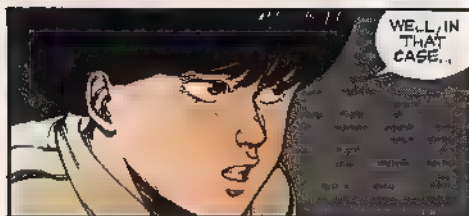
EXACTLY! SO, IF
RYU COULD MEET
HIM, WE'D FIND OUT
FOR SURE IF HE'S
WHO HE SAYS HE
IS.



IT'LL BE TROUBLE
YOU DON'T NEED
IF I LEAVE HIM
BEHIND AND HE
TURNS OUT TO
BE A PHONY..



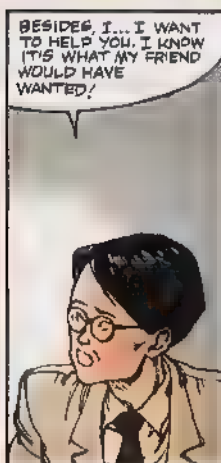
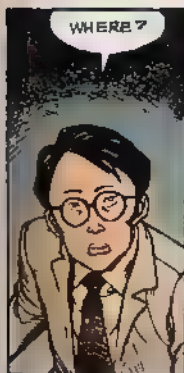
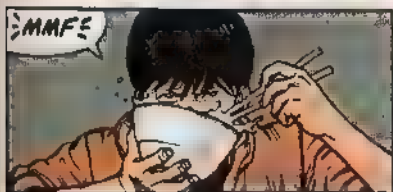
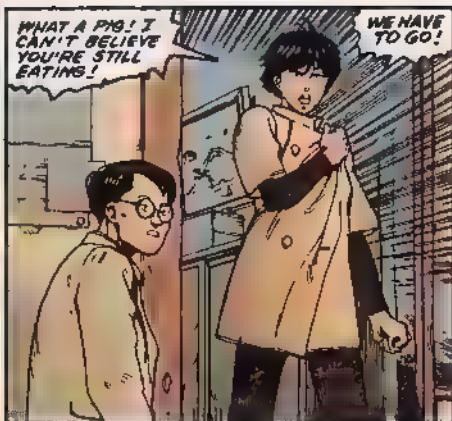
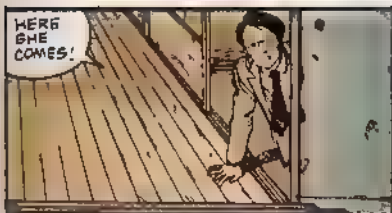
AND F HE
IS..



WELL, IN
THAT
CASE..



... I WANT TO BE
THE ONE WHO
TAKES CARE OF
IT.





PLEASE DON'T
TAKE THIS WRONG.
I KNOW YOU
HELPED JS .



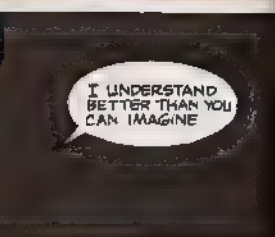
... BUT WE DON'T
TRUST YOU. WE
CAN'T AFFORD
TO



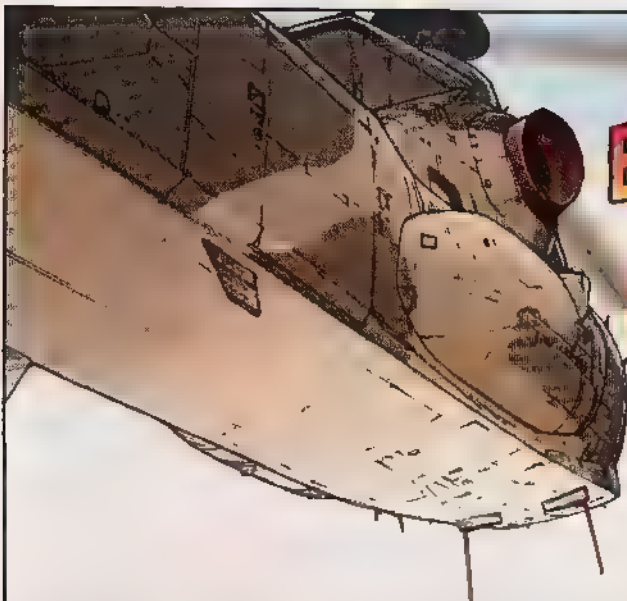
WE
CAN'T?



THAT'S THE
WAY IT IS,
HUNH?

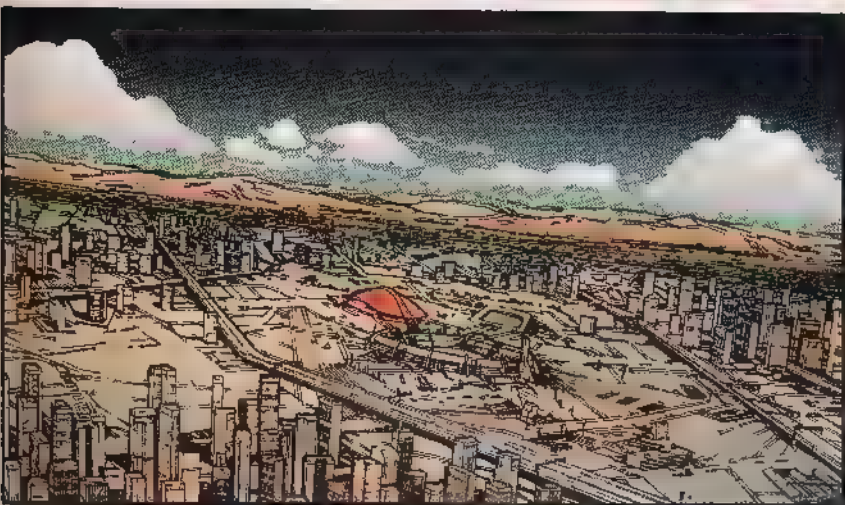
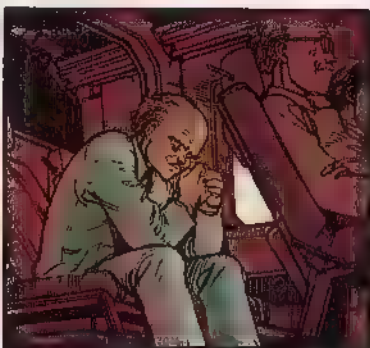


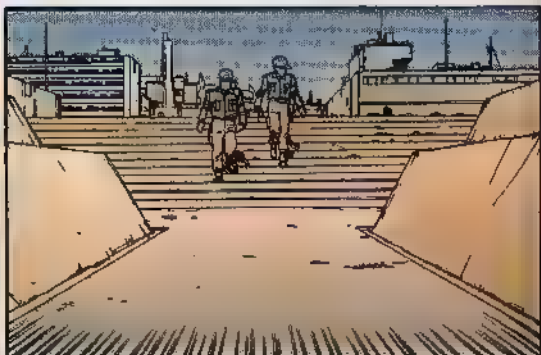
I UNDERSTAND
BETTER THAN YOU
CAN IMAGINE

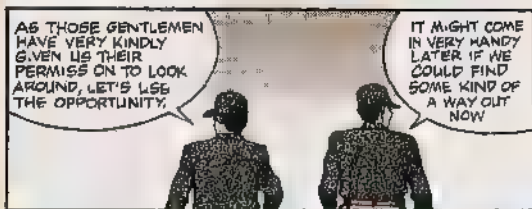
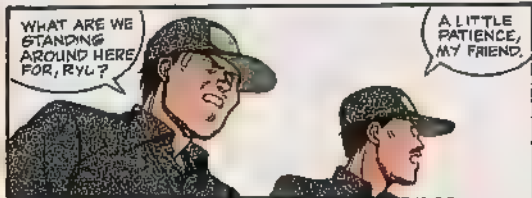
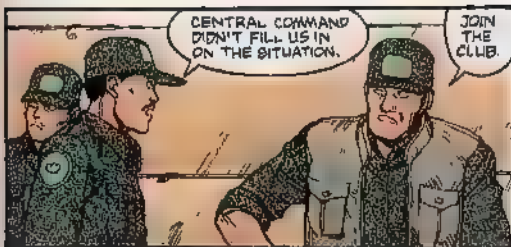


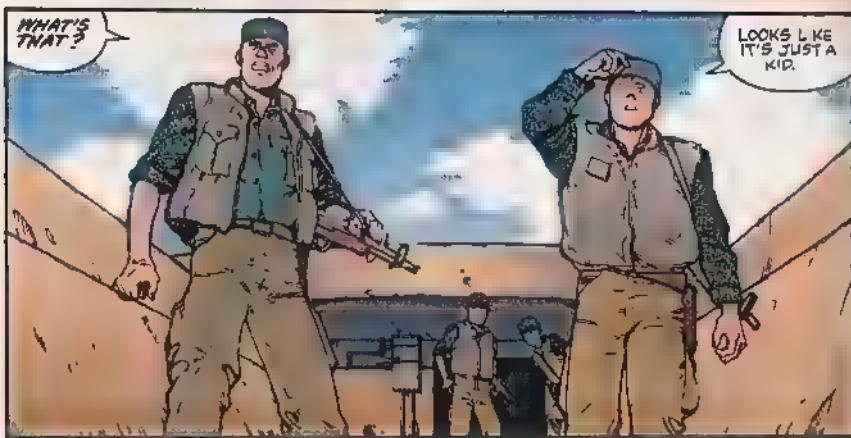
BUDDA

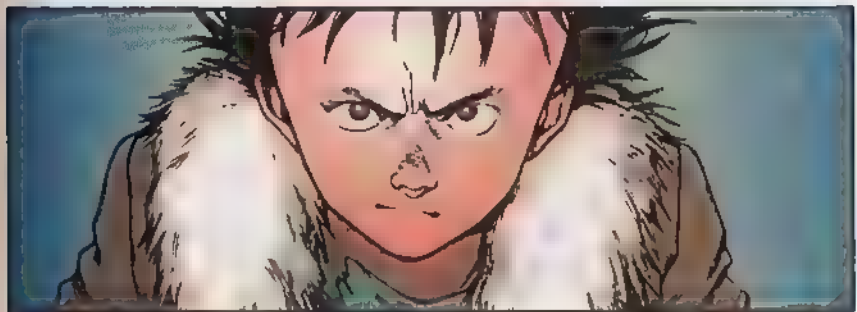
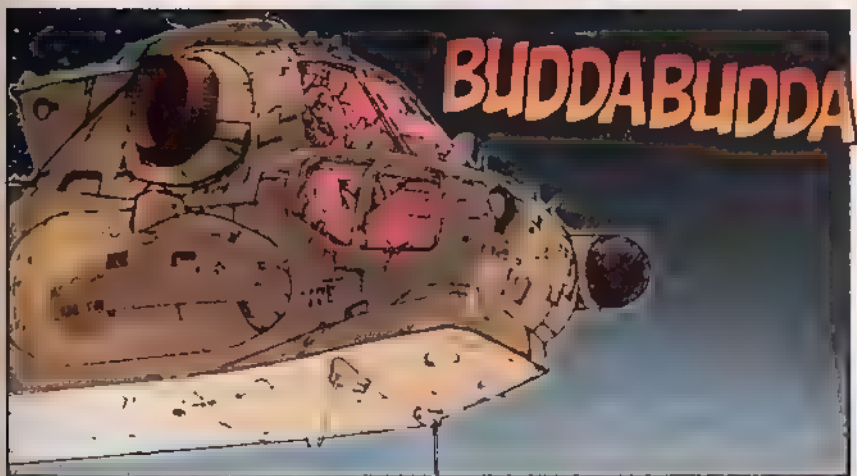
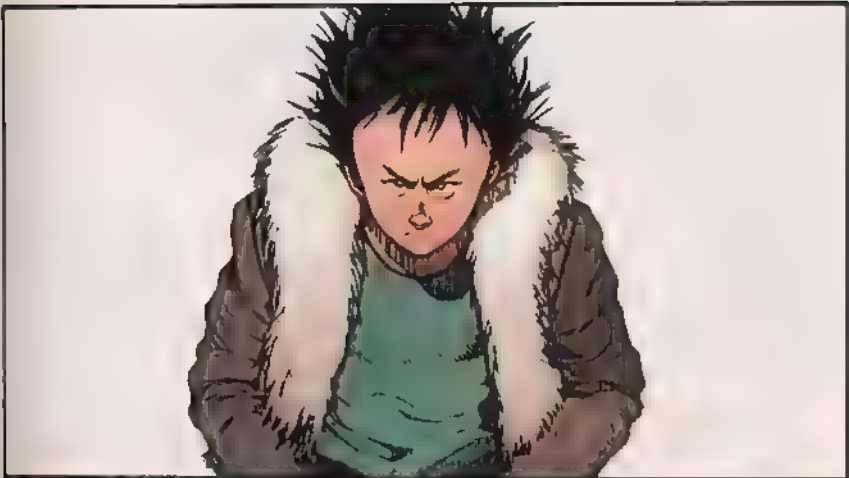
BUDDA

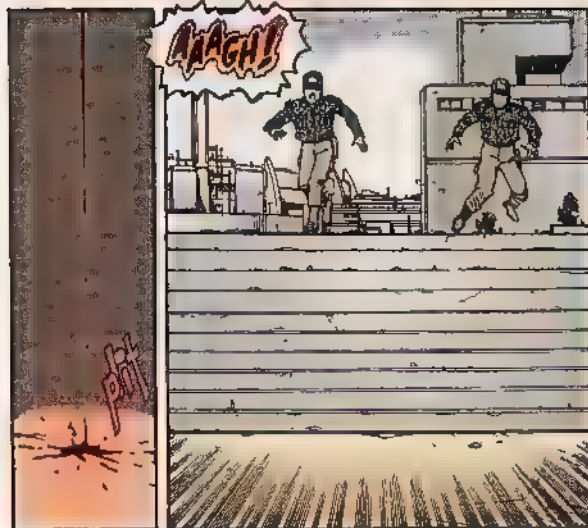
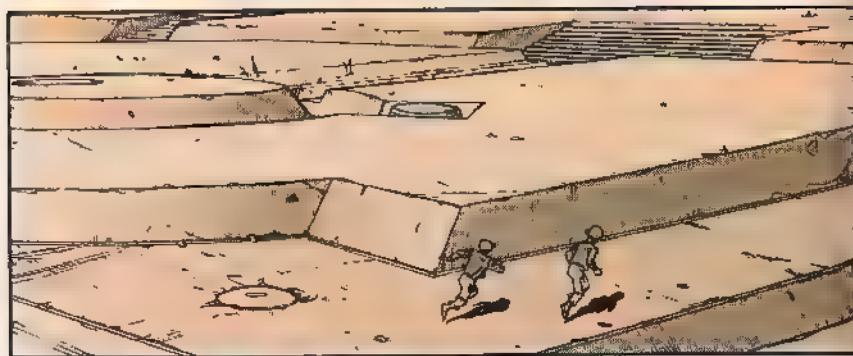
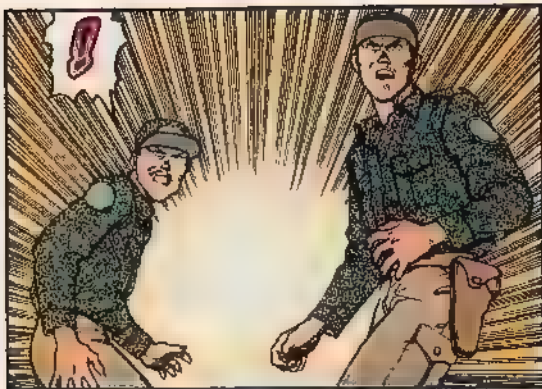




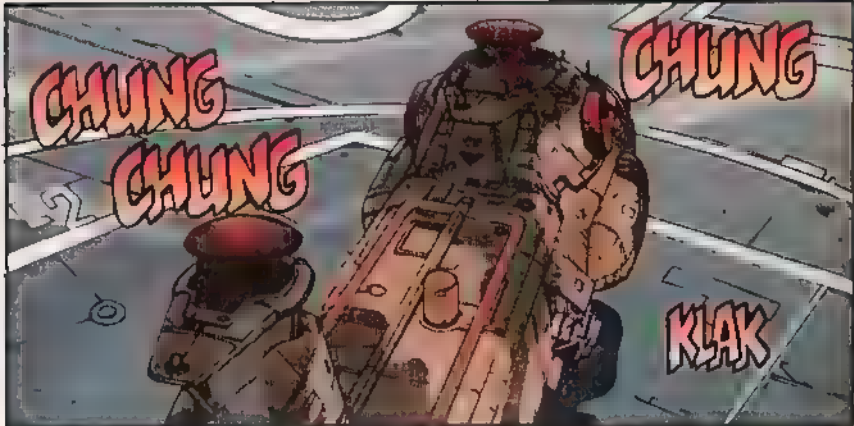


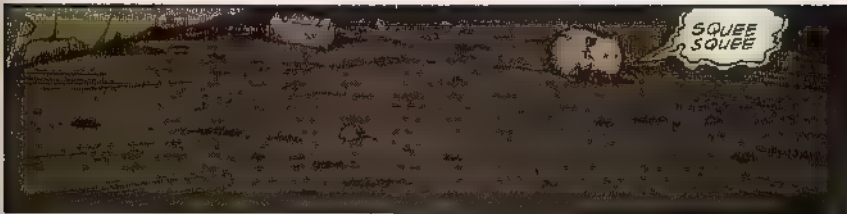












SQUEE
SQUEE



SAME OLD,
SAME OLD.
THIS PLACE
STINKS!



WHY DO WE
ALWAYS
HAVE TO
TAKE THE
SEWER?

OH,
SHUT
UP!

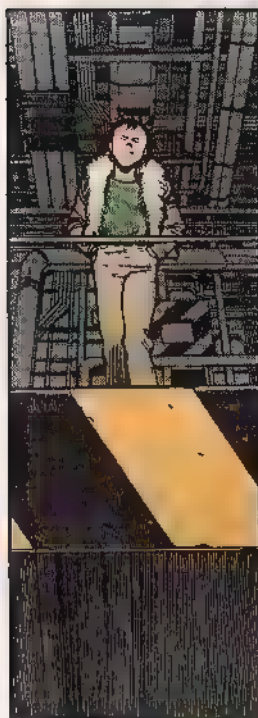
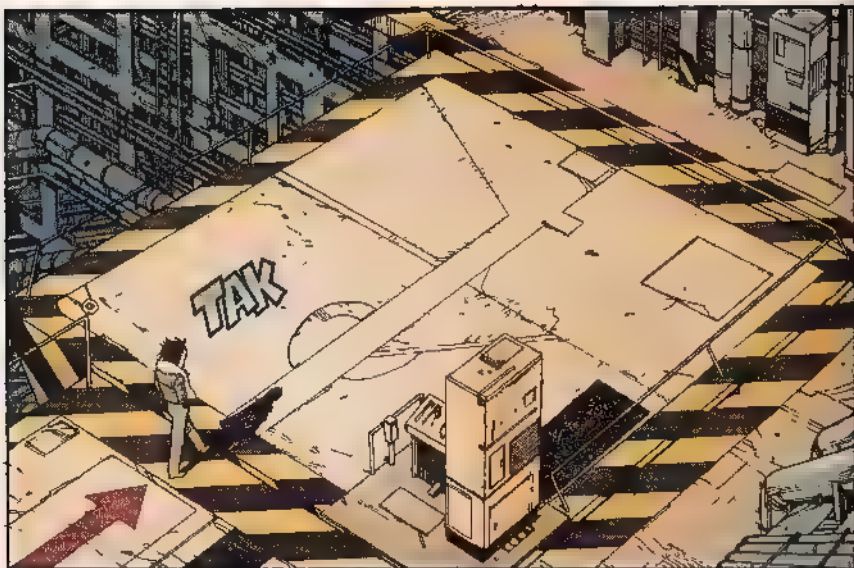


ARE YOU SENTIMENTALLY
ATTACHED
TO THIS
PLACE,
OR
WHAT?

WE CAME THIS
WAY BECAUSE
IT'S THE ONLY
WAY I
KNOW.



NOW
KNOCK IT
OFF!



BE
CAREFUL

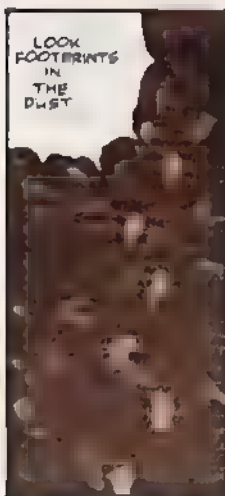
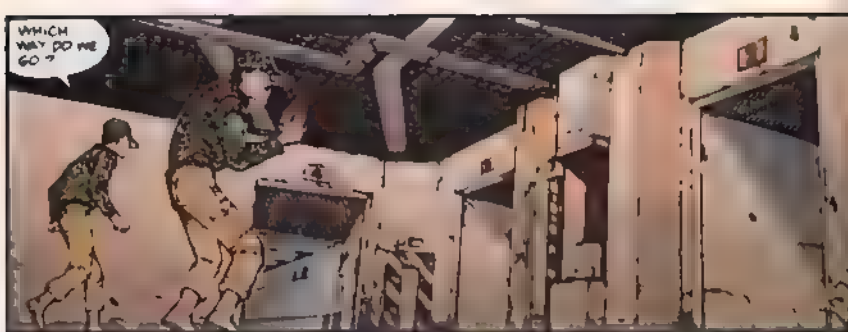


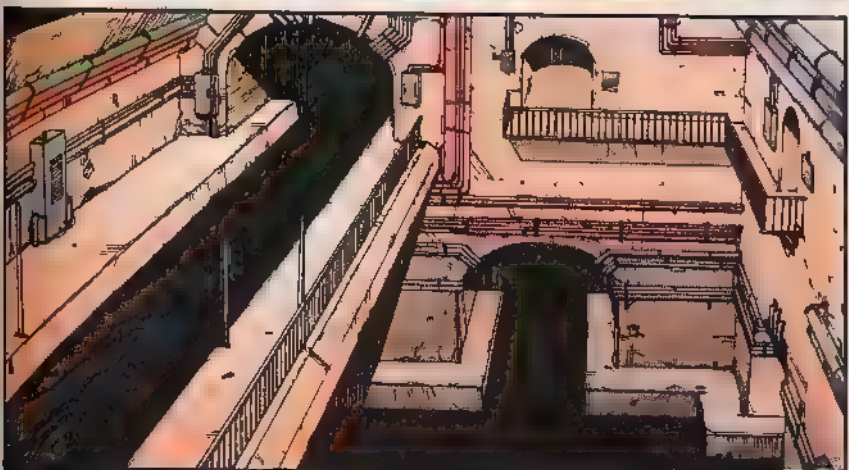
I DON'T KNOW OF
ANY KIND OF WEAPON
THAT COULD DO WHAT
WAS DONE TO THOSE
GUYS, RYU.

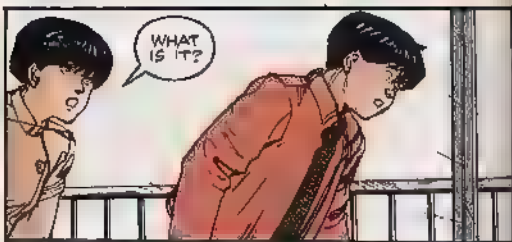
ME NEITHER

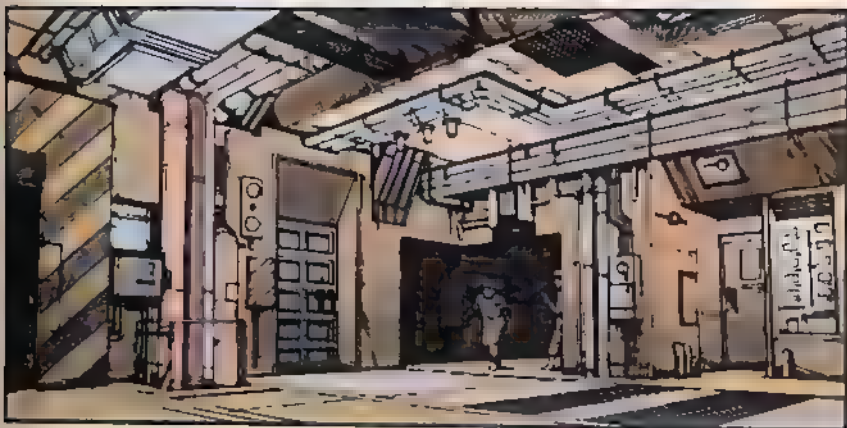
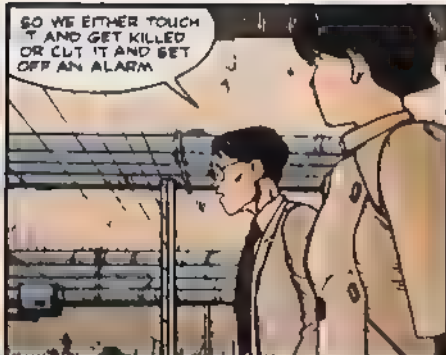
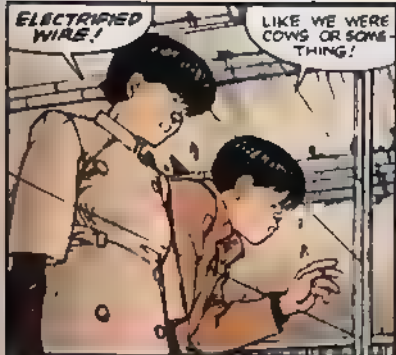
WHAT KIND OF
MONSTER DO YOL
SUPPOSE ..

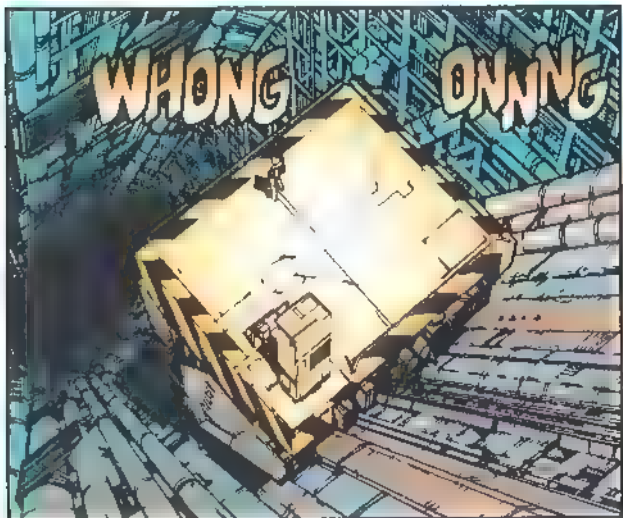
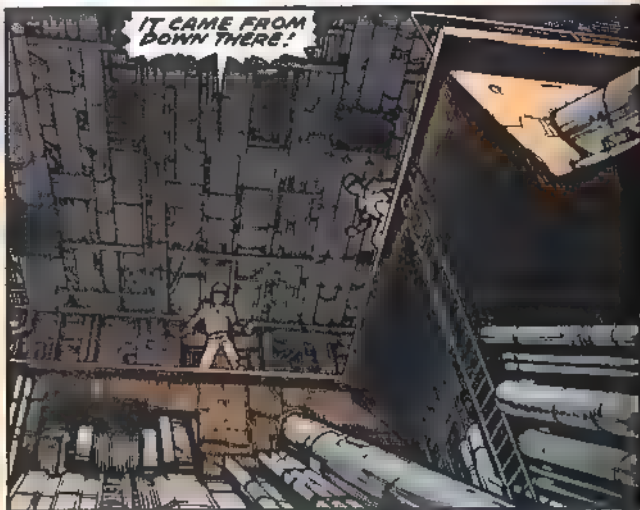
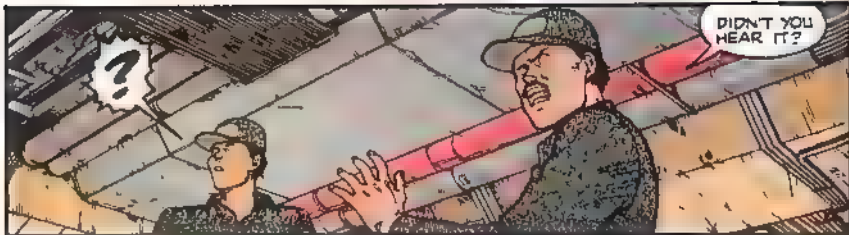
HUNH?

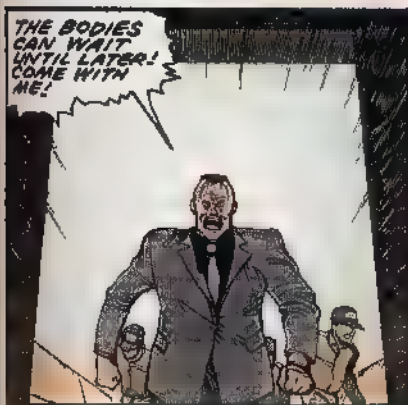
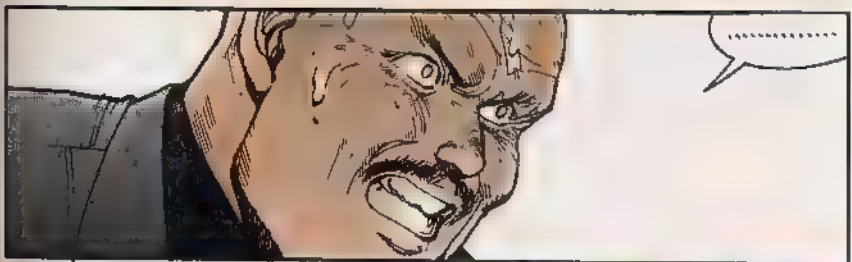
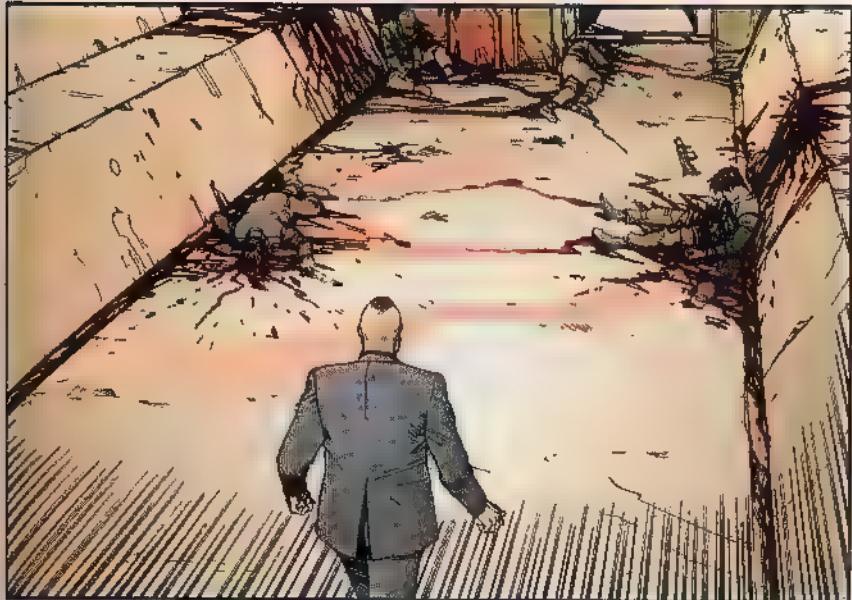






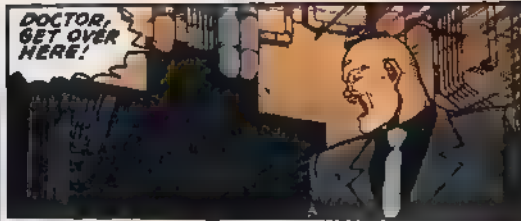




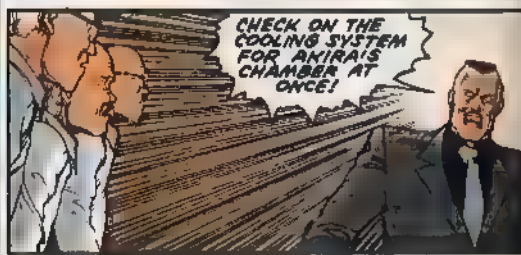




COLONEL! THE
ELEVATOR'S
ON ITS WAY
DOWN!



DOCTOR,
GET OVER
HERE!



CHECK ON THE
COOLING SYSTEM
FOR AKIRA'S
CHAMBER AT
ONCE!



HAVE
THEM POST A
GARRISON AT
THE UNDERPASS!

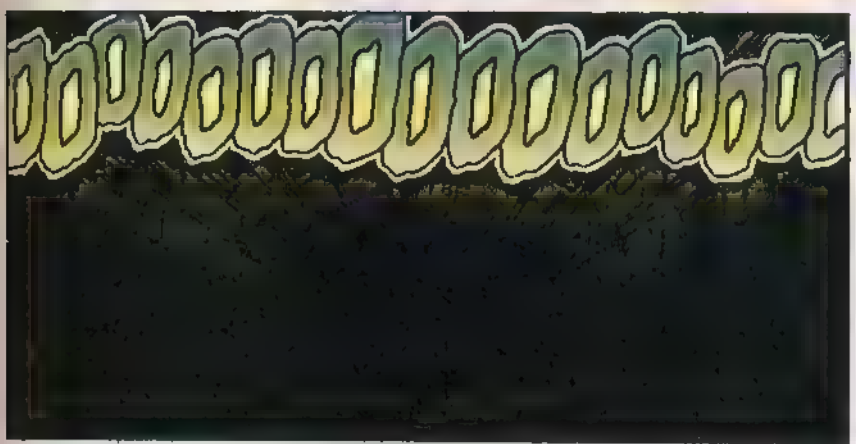
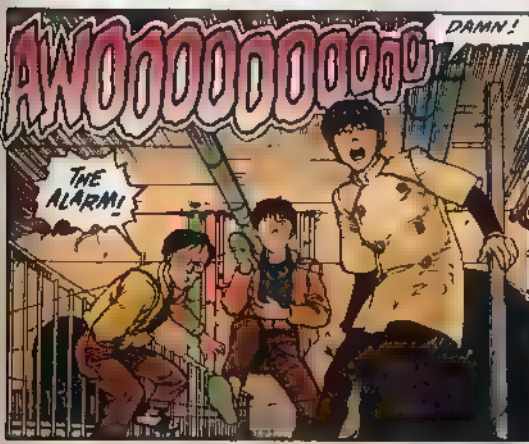
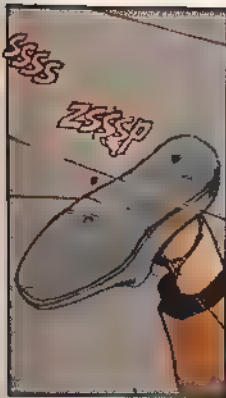


YESSIR!

AND SEE THAT
THE FLYING
SQUADRON IS
STANDING BY!



MOVE, YOU
IDIOT!



AWOOOOOOOOOOOO

Ryu!!

DON'T
PANIC!

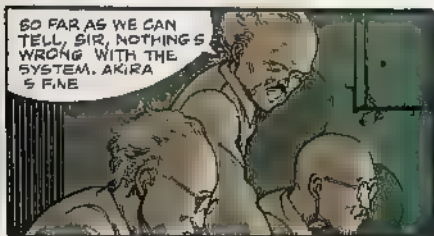
THEY'RE NOT
ONTO US YET
WHOEVER FOUND
ALL THOSE BODIES
UPSTAIRS MUST
HAVE SET IT
OFF



WELL?



SO FAR AS WE CAN
TELL, SIR, NOTHING'S
WRONG WITH THE
SYSTEM. AKIRA
S FINE



IT COULDN'T
HURT TO GO
DOWNSTAIRS
AND CHECK
IN PERSON

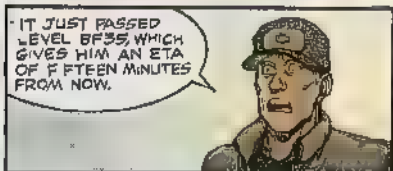


HOW SOON TILL
THE ELEVATOR
REACHES
BOTTOM?



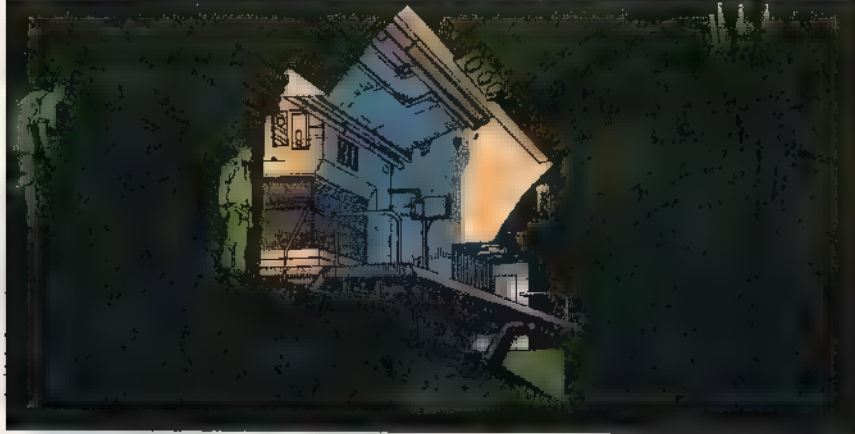
SIR!

IT JUST PASSED
LEVEL BF35, WHICH
GIVES HIM AN ETA
OF FIFTEEN MINUTES
FROM NOW.



WHAT HAPPENED TO
THE GARRISON? ARE
THEY IN PLACE YET?





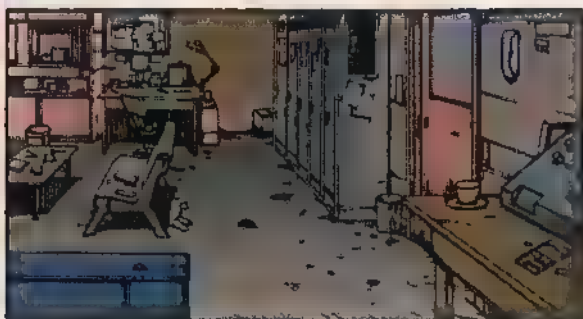
HHMM

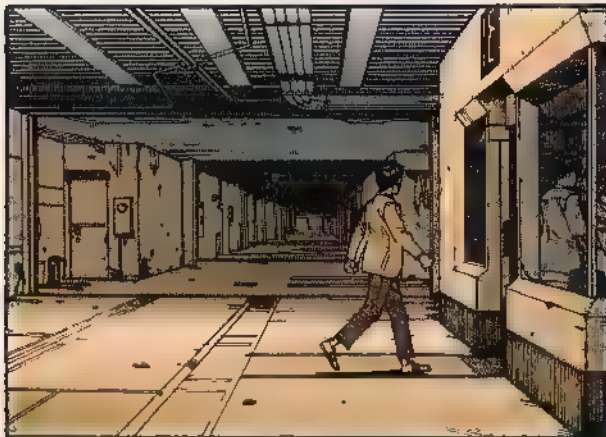


HOW'S IT
LOOK?



TAK
TAK
TAK
TAK





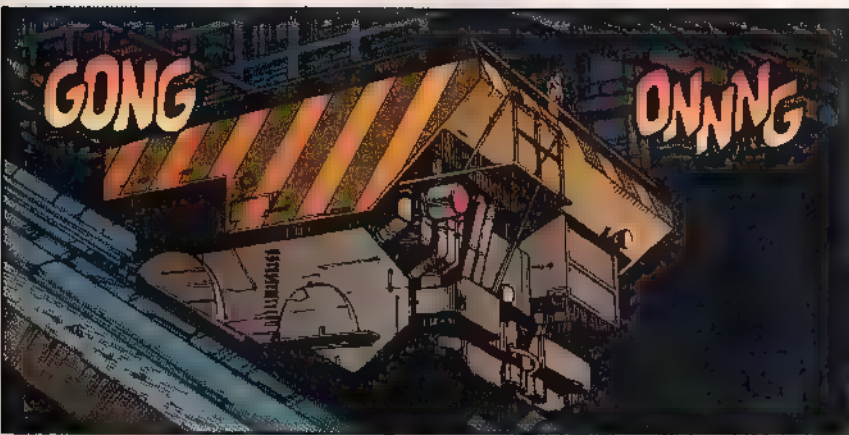
YOU AND YOUR MEN ARE TO FOLLOW THE L FT INTO THE LOWER LEVELS, THERE IS ONE PASSENGER ABOARD.



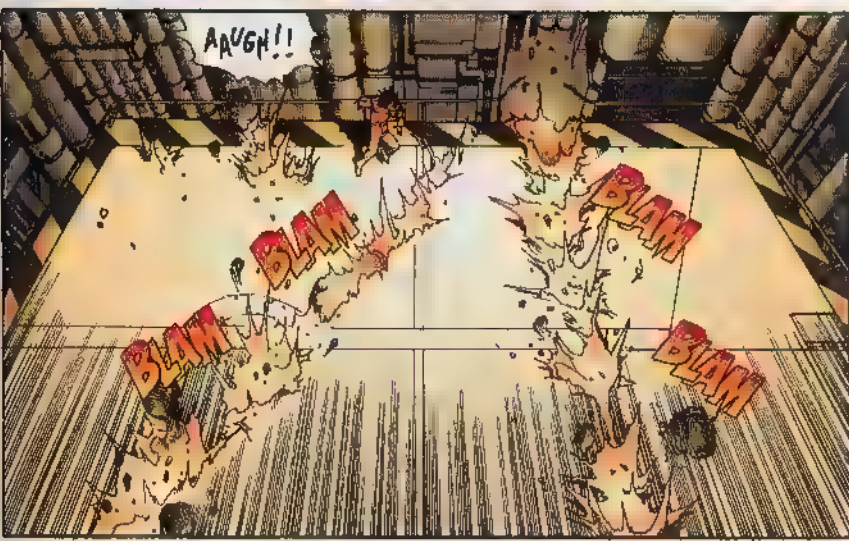
I REPEAT, DO NOT LET THE BOY GET THROUGH.

GONG

ONING



dong



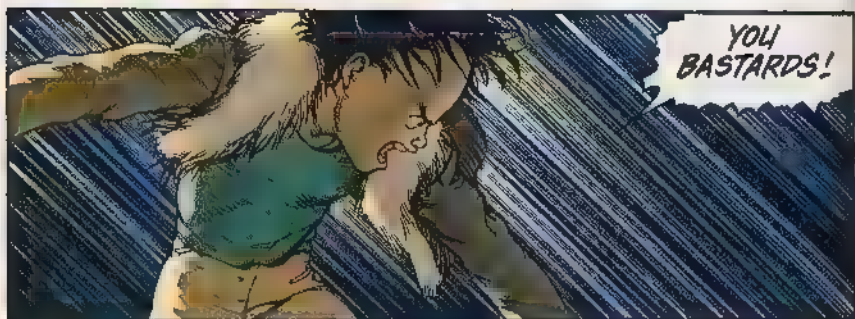
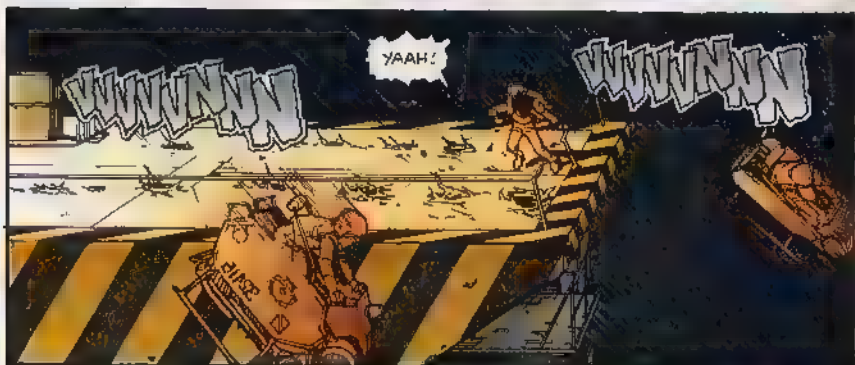
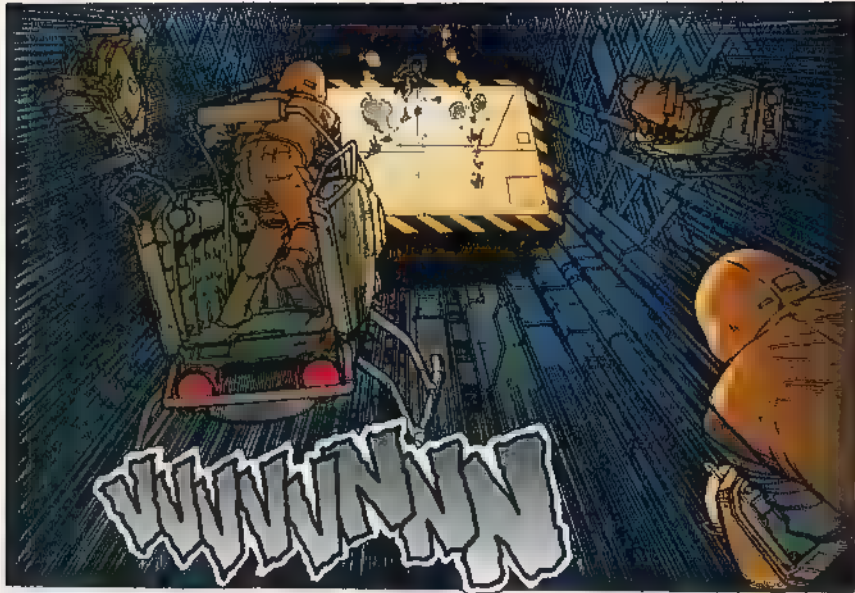
AUGH!!

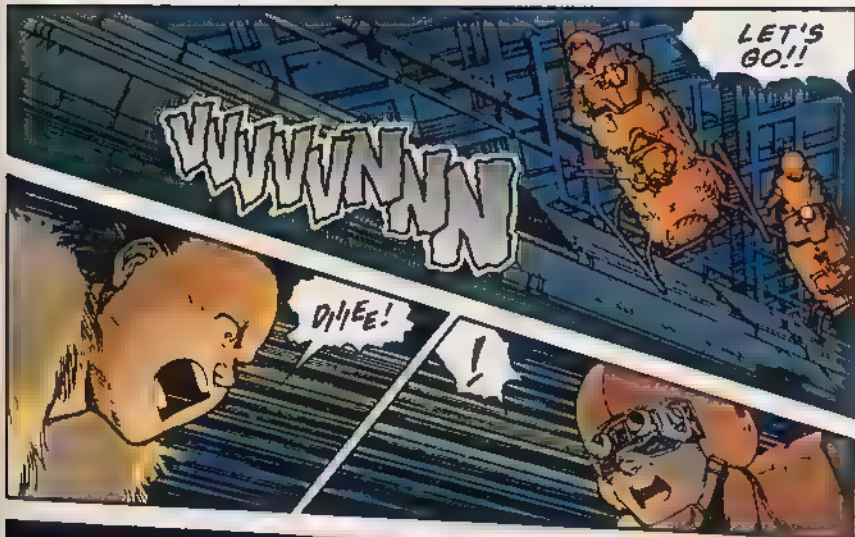
BLAM

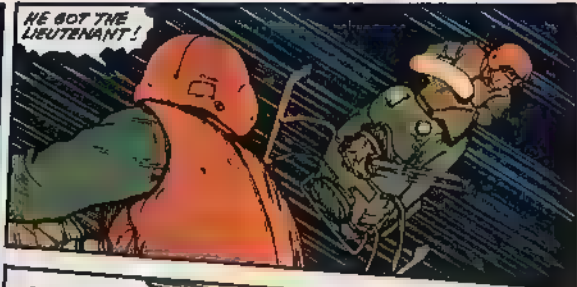
BLAM

BLAM

BLAM







HE GOT THE
LIEUTENANT!



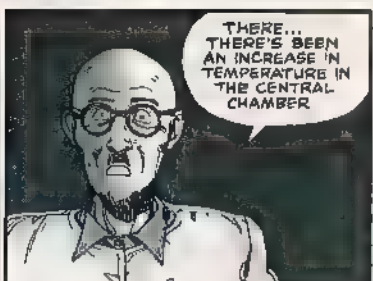
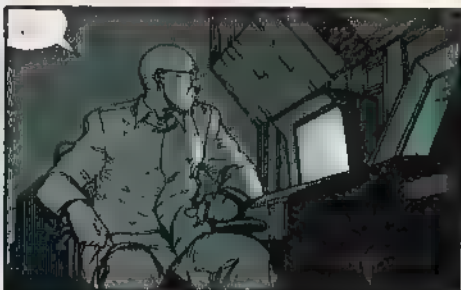
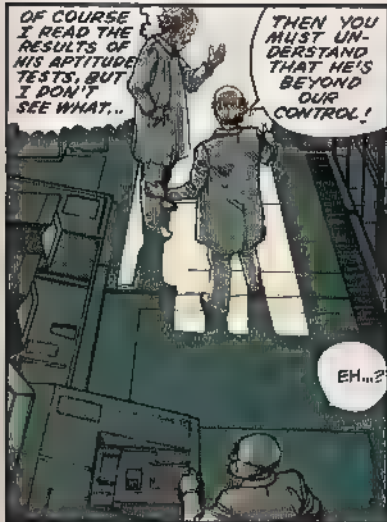
COME ON
AND
TRY IT,
ASSHOLE!



WUWUWUWU



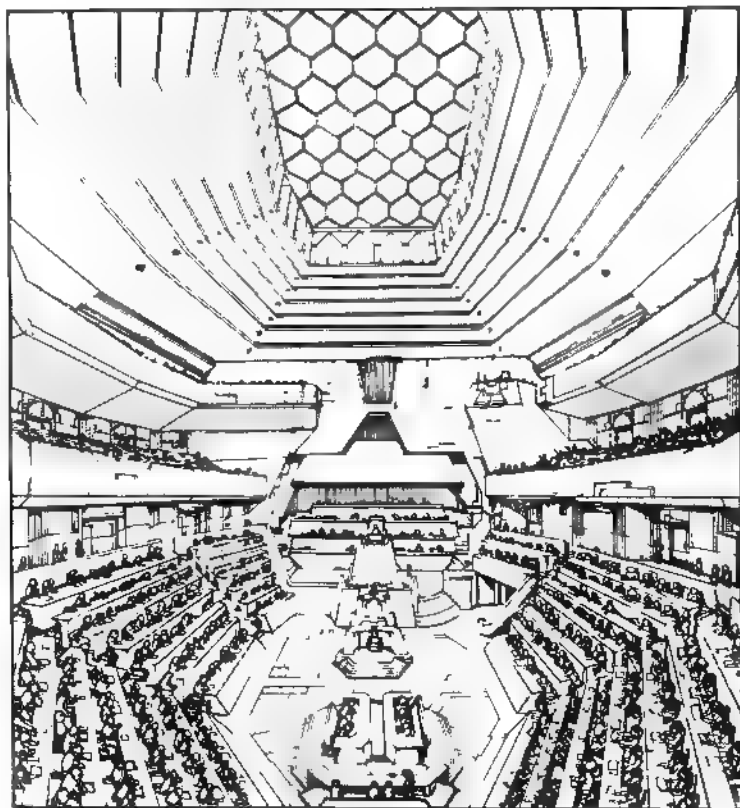
AAHHEE!

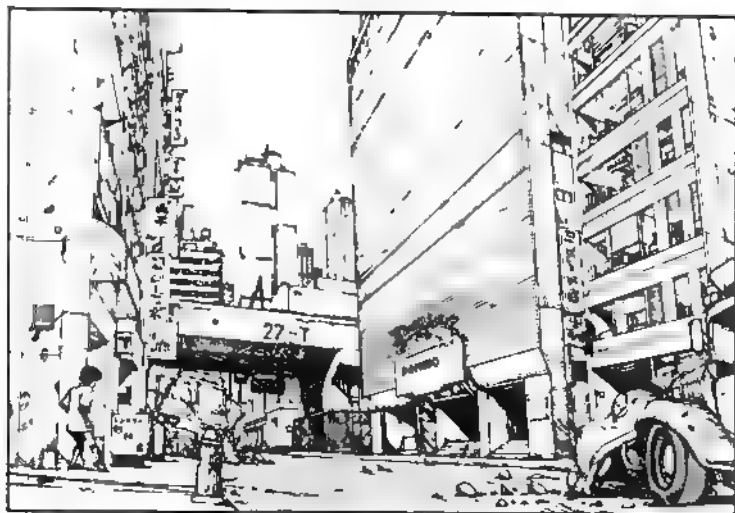


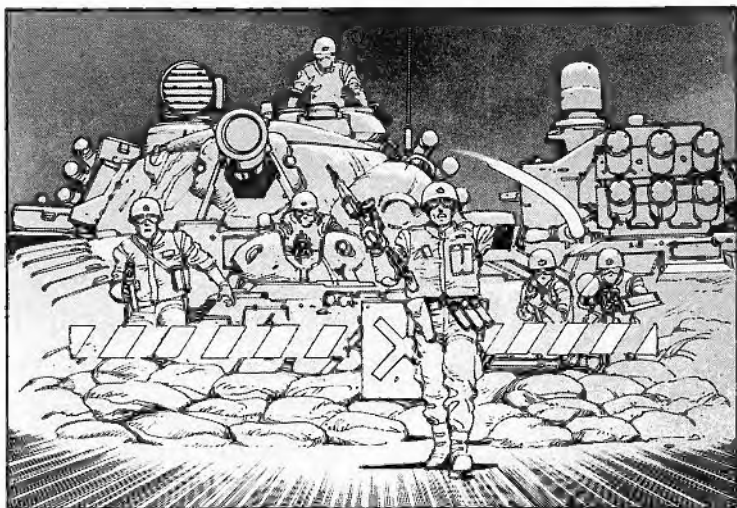
NEXT ISSUE: THE AWAKENING

OTOMO GALLERY

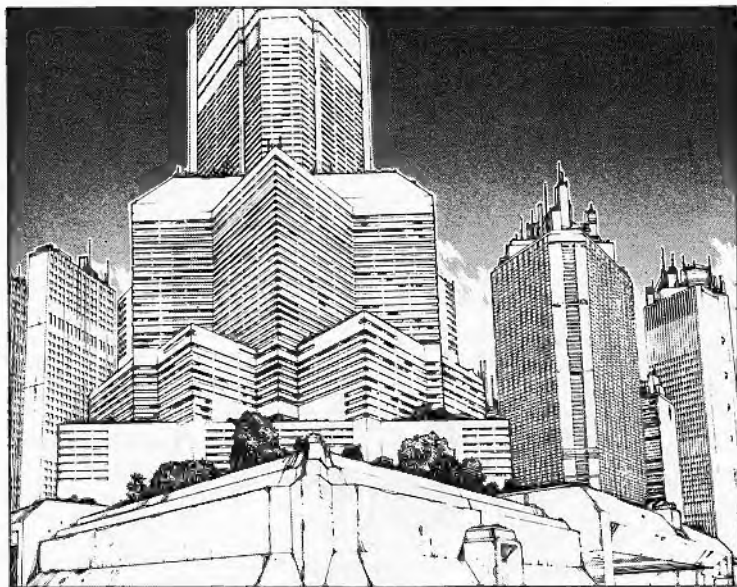
Read ing *Akira*, it's natural to be swept along by its characters and story. Focused on these elements, it's so easy to overlook artist-creator Katsuhiro Otomo's many other virtues. For this gallery section, we've taken panels from up and coming issues that provide impressive examples of his approach to architecture and technical design. These elements are essential in conjuring the saga's convincing mood.







From the tanks and weaponry of a road block to the geometric array of city towers, Otomo uses this background material to make his science-fiction vision complete.



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chief assistant to Mr. Otomo

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ARCHIE GOODWIN

editor, Epic edition

Escape. Somewhere on the streets of Neo-Tokyo in the year 2030 the young psychic-powered killer, Tetsuo, roams free of the secret government project where he learned of one possessing even stronger paranormal abilities than his own ... AKIRA. Tetsuo now knows where this mysterious being lies in cryogenic sleep and means to find him. Meanwhile the anti-government agent, Kay, and Tetsuo's former friend, Kaneda, are fighting their way out of the same project, hoping to overtake Tetsuo. They have the behind-the-scenes aid of three of the project's mutant children and an unexpected ally among their pursuers. But their escape, like Tetsuo's, can only send them stalking into an even greater, more ominous confrontation.

KATSUHIRO OTOMO'S



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I love um

I buy um

I preserve um